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1940 Federal Population Census

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More 1940 Census Resources

- [How to Start Your 1940 Census Research](#)
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Part 1: General Information

The 1940 census will be released digitally on April 2, 2012.

The digital images will be accessible at NARA facilities nationwide through our public access computers as well as on personal computers via the internet.

The 1940 and later censuses are not available for public use because of a statutory 72-year restriction on access for privacy reasons. (92 Stat. 915; Public Law 95-416; October 5, 1978). If you need information about yourself or a deceased person from the 1940 or later censuses for legal or other purposes, fill out Form BCC-600 from the [Bureau of the Census Age Search Service](#) or write to: U.S. Census Bureau, National Processing Center, 1201 East 10th St., Jeffersonville, IN 47132.

The census day was April 1, 1940.

- [1940 Census Form](#)
- [Questions Asked](#)
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1940 Census Forms

The 1940 census questionnaire was printed on 23 3/4" x 12 1/2" paper. These double sided forms provided space for 40 entries on each side plus two additional lines for the 5% sample questions. The reverse side was identical except that lines were numbered 41 to 80, and the sample-line numbers were different.

- [Larger Version](#)
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An original blank 1940 Federal Decennial
Census Population Schedule.

View a blank [1940 census form](#).

Print out a [1940 census template](#) (legal size).

Questions Asked on the 1940 Census

The questions recorded on the 1940 census schedules are similar to the questions found on earlier census schedules. As the enumerators went door-to-door they recorded the [location](#) of the household and provided additional [household data](#), such as the names for each member of the household and their relationships to the head of the household. Enumerators also recorded a [personal description](#) for each member of the household which included their age and sex; information about each individual's [education](#); their [birthplace and naturalization status](#); and a unique question asking about their [residence on April 1, 1935](#).

In addition, all individuals over the age of 14 were asked questions about their [employment](#) and 5% of the population were asked fifteen supplementary questions. This sample survey included questions about their [parents birthplace](#); [earliest language spoken](#) in the household; questions relating to [veterans](#); [social security](#); [occupation](#); and a final section specifically for women, which recorded [marital status](#) and [number of children born](#).

Location:

- Street, avenue, road, etc.
- House number (in cities and towns).

Household Data:

- Number of household in order of visitation.
- Home owned (O) or rented (R).
- Value of home, if owned, or monthly rental, if rented.
- Does this household live on a farm? (Yes or No).

Name:

- Name of each person whose *usual place of residence* on April 1, 1940, was in this household. Be sure to include:
 - Persons temporarily absent from household. Write "Ab" after names of such persons.
 - Children under 1 year of age. Write "Infant" if child has not been given a first name.
 - Enter X after name of person furnishing information.

Relation:

- Relationship of this person to the head of the household, as wife, daughter, father, mother-in-law, grandson, lodger, lodger's wife, servant, hired hand, etc...

Personal Description:

- Sex - Male (M), Female (F).
- Color or race.
- Age at last birthday.
- Marital status - Single (S), Married (M), Widowed (Wd), Divorced (D).

Education:

- Attended school or college any time since March 1, 1940? (Yes or No)
- Highest grade of school completed.

Place of Birth:

- If born in the United States, give State, Territory, or possession. If foreign born, give country in which birthplace was situated on January 1, 1937. Distinguish Canada-French from Canada-English and Irish Free State (Eire) from Northern Ireland.

Citizenship:

- Citizenship of the foreign born.

Residence, April 1, 1935:

IN WHAT PLACE DID THIS PERSON LIVE ON April 1, 1935? For a person who, on April 1, 1935, was living in the same house as at present, enter in Col. 17 "Same house," and for one living in a different house but in the same city or town, enter "Same place," leaving Cols. 18, 19, and 20 blank, in both instances. For a person who lived in a different place, enter city or town, county, and State, as directed in the Instructions. (Enter actual place of residence, which may differ from mail address.)

- City, town, or village having 2,500 or more inhabitants. Enter "R" for all other places.
- County.
- State (or Territory or foreign country).
- On a farm? (Yes or No).

Persons 14 Years Old and Over - Employment Status:

- Was this person AT WORK for pay or profit in private or nonemergency Gov't. work during week of March 24-30? (Yes or No).
- If not, was he at work on, or assigned to, public EMERGENCY WORK (WPA, NYA, CCC, etc.) during week of March 24-30? (Yes or No).

If neither at work nor assigned to public emergency work. ("No" in Cols. 21 and 22).

- Was this person SEEKING WORK? (Yes or No).
- If not seeking work, did he HAVE A JOB, business, etc.? (Yes or No).

For persons answering "No" to question 21, 22, 23 and 24.

- Indicate whether engaged in home housework (H), in school (S), unable to work (U), or other (Ot).

If at private or nonemergency Govt. work. "Yes" in col. 21.

- Number of hours worked during week of March 24-30, 1940.

If seeking work or assigned to public emergency work. ("Yes" in Col. 22 or 23).

- Duration of unemployment up to March 30, 1940 - in weeks.

Occupation, Industry and Class of Worker:

For a person *at work, assigned to public emergency work, or with a job* ("Yes" in Col. 21, 22, or 24), enter *present* occupation, industry, and class of worker. For a person seeking work ("Yes" in Col. 23): a) if he has previous work experience, enter *last* occupation, industry, and class of worker; or b) if he does not have previous work experience, enter "New worker" in Col. 28, and leave Cols. 29 and 30 blank.

- Occupation: Trade, profession, or particular kind of work, as *frame spinner, salesman, laborer, rivet heater, music teacher*.
- Industry: Industry or business, as *cotton mill, retail grocery, farm, shipyard, public school*.
- Class of Worker.
- Number of weeks worked in 1939 (Equivalent full-time weeks).

Income in 1939 (12 months ended December 31, 1939):

- Amount of money wages or salary received (including commissions).
- Did this person receive income of \$50 or more from sources other than money wages or salary? (Yes or No).

- Number of Farm Schedule.

Supplementary Questions 35-50:

For persons enumerated on lines 14 and 29 [about a 5% sample of the population]

- Name.

For Persons of All Ages:

Place of Birth of Father and Mother

If born in the United States, give State, Territory, or possession. If foreign born, give country in which birthplace was situated on January 1, 1937. Distinguish: Canada-French from Canada-English and Irish Free State from Northern Ireland.

- Father.
- Mother.

Mother Tongue (or Native Language):

- Language spoken in home in earliest childhood.

Veterans:

Is this person a veteran of the United States military forces; or the wife, widow, or under-18-year-old child of a veteran?

- If so, enter "Yes."
- If child, is veteran-father dead? (Yes or No)
- War or military service.

Social Security:

- Does this person have a Federal Social Security Number? (Yes or No)
- Were deductions for Federal Old-Age Insurance or Railroad Retirement made from this person's wages or salary in 1939? (Yes or No)
- If so, were deductions made from (1) all, (2) one-half or more, (3) part, but less than half, of wages or salary?

Usual Occupation, Industry, and Class of Worker:

Enter that occupation which the person regards as his usual occupation and at which he is physically able to work. If the person is unable to determine this, enter that occupation at which he has worked longest during the past 10 years and at which he is physically able to work. Enter also usual industry and usual class of worker. For a person without previous work experience, enter "None" in column 45 and leave columns 46 and 47 blank.

- Usual occupation.
- Usual industry.
- Usual class of worker.

For all women who are or have been married:

- Has this woman been married more than once? (Yes or No)
 - Age at first marriage.
 - Number of children ever born (do not include stillbirths).
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Symbols and Explanatory Notes

Census takers were given specific instructions and codes to use when entering data on the census schedules. Below you will find a list of instructions for some of the census questions.

To see a chart to help decipher the symbols used on the 1940 census please [click here](#) .

- **Column 5: Value of Home, If Owned.**
 - Where owner's household occupies only a part of a structure, estimate value of portion occupied by owner's household. Thus the value of the unit occupied by the owner of a two-family house might be approximately one-half the total value of the structure.
- **Column 11: Age at Last Birthday.**
 - Enter age of children born on or after April 1, 1939, as follows. Born in: [\(see chart\)](#)
- **Column 21: Was This Person at Work?**
 - Enter "Yes" for persons at work for pay or profit in private or nonemergency Government work. Include unpaid family workers - that is, related members of the family working without money wages or salary on work (other than housework or incidental chores) which contributed to the family income.
- **Column 24: Did This Person Have A Job?**
 - Enter "Yes" for a person (not seeking work) who had a job, business, or professional enterprise, but did not work during week of March 24-30 for any of the following reasons: Vacation; temporary illness; industrial dispute; layoff not exceeding 4 weeks with instructions to return to work at a specific date; layoff due to temporarily bad weather conditions.

Column Number and Heading	Codes Used	Code Meaning
<i>Column 10:</i> Color or Race Other races, spell out in full.	W Neg In Chi Jp Fil Hin Kor	White Negro Indian Chinese Japanese Filipino Hindu Korean
<i>Column 11:</i> Age at Last Birthday (Do not include children born on or after April 1, 1940.)	11/12 10/12 9/12 8/12 7/12 6/12 5/12 4/12 3/12 2/12 1/12 0/12	April 1939 May 1939 June 1939 July 1939 August 1939 September 1939 October 1939 November 1939 December 1939 January 1940 February 1940 March 1940
<i>Column 14:</i> Highest Grade of School Completed	0 1 to 8 H-1 to H-4 C1 to C4 C-5	None Elementary School, 1st to 8th High School, 1st to 4th year College, 1st to 4th year College, 5th year or more
<i>Column 16:</i> Citizenship of the Foreign Born	Na Pa Al Am Cit	Naturalized Having First Papers Alien American Citizen Born Abroad
<i>Columns 30 and 47:</i> Class of Worker	PW GW E OA NP	Wage/Salary Worker in Private Work Wage/Salary Worker in Gov't Work Employer Working on Own Account Unpaid Family Worker

<i>Column 41:</i> War or Military Service	W S SW R Ot	World War Spanish-American War; Philippine Insurrection or Boxer Rebellion Spanish-American War & World War Regular Establishment or Peace-Time Service Other War or Expedition
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8601 Adelphi Road, College Park, MD 20740-6001 • Telephone: 1-86-NARA-NARA or 1-866-272-6272